

Laurence Charter School for the Academically Gifted  
**Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

UMASS/AMHERST



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Executive Office of Education

## Charter School Application Designated Contact Person

Please provide the Executive Office of Education with the following information identifying a designated contact person for the group submitting an application for charter school status. This form *must* be filed along with the charter school application no later than February 15, 1994. Please mail all required materials to:

Secretary of Education  
 ATTN: Charter Schools  
 Executive Office of Education  
 One Ashburton Place, Room 1401  
 Boston, Massachusetts 02108

Tel: (617) 727-1313

GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS  
 COLLECTION

JUN 08 1994

University of Massachusetts  
 Depository Copy

Please print or type:

James A. Scione (Individual)

Name of organization/group filing for charter school status

<b>Contact Person Name:</b>	James A. Scione	
<b>Signature:</b>	<i>James A. Scione</i>	<b>Date:</b> 2/11/1994
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# Commonwealth of Massachusetts

## Executive Office of Education

### Charter School Application

I/We, the undersigned charter school applicant(s), do hereby certify that the information provided herein and filed with the Executive Office of Education on this the 11th day of February month) of the year 1994, is to the best of my/our knowledge, truthful and accurate.

(This signature sheet *must* be attached to the application when it is filed.)

Name:	James A. Scione	Signature:	<i>James A. Scione</i>	Date:	February 11, 1994
Address:	17 Merrill St.	City:	Methuen	State:	MA
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If more space is required, please attach additional sheets.

Executive Office of Education, One Ashburton Place, Room 1401, Boston, MA, 02108



## CHARTER SCHOOL APPLICATION: Part I

### Mission Statement:

The Lawrence Charter School for the Academically Gifted will offer a rigorous liberal arts education to students who are able and motivated and whose parents value education. The school will be rigorous in that students can expect an accelerated curriculum which will challenge their potential and incorporate logical reasoning, critical thinking and the development of creative problem solving, ample homework and an insistence on all-out effort. The honor code is one committed to upholding the highest standards of honor and conduct and seeks to inspire its students to ethical responsibility not only within the academic confines but in their personal lives as well.

A well-balanced program structured to insure the development of the total child while fostering the pursuit of the highest academic excellence of which the student is capable will be the hallmark of the Lawrence experience. The school will encourage intellectual excellence by means of programs which are suited to the students' abilities and needs which are structured to consistently build on the work of previous years, through direct teaching, and through the creative achievements, independent study and self-discovery of the students.

This is a cooperative effort with the home and local community which share the responsibility of affecting the total development of the child. In providing the best possible formation and education of its students, the school desires that they will in time be in positions to better their world as active and productive citizens of a democratic society.

### School Objectives:

- A. The Lawrence Charter School addresses the concerns of the U.S. Department of Education and the National Association for Gifted Children to meet the specific needs of the academically gifted, including:
- 1) development of a comprehensive accelerated curriculum with exposure to secondary level material for upper level students with earlier introduction, development and mastery of the basics in all subject areas;
  - 2) incorporation of logical reasoning, higher level thinking skills, and creative problem solving throughout the curriculum to assist students in becoming thinking members of society;
  - 3) extensive emphasis in and development of the communication skills- listening, speaking, reading and writing- the foundations of literacy- to aid students in becoming effective human beings;
  - 4) incorporation of suitable electives to meet student interests, abilities and needs beyond the core-curriculum.



LAWRENCE CHARTER SCHOOL PROJECT  
CHARTER APPLICATION  
PART I

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### School Demographics:

- A. The school will be located in Lawrence, an economically and educationally depressed municipality with a population of about 60,000 .  
A facility has not been secured at this time. I felt to do so without gaining tentative approval for the school would be premature. However, a number of suitable sites are available.
- B. While other municipalities in the greater Lawrence area would benefit from such an endeavor, Lawrence is a city in great need of educational improvement and community revitalization
- C. Lawrence has a large Hispanic population as well as a number of Black and Asian families. Together with its low and middle income Caucasian populace, Lawrence is rich in cultural diversity but poor in economic and educational opportunities.
- D. The school's anticipated enrollment is 200 students.
- E. The school will serve students in grades four through eight, with approximately 40 students in each grade.

### Recruiting and Marketing Plan:

- A. To attract a sufficient pool of applicants, the school would publicize through:
  - 1. direct mail using an introductory brochure;
  - 2. the local newspaper utilizing both paid advertisements and free publicity;
  - 3. posters displayed in public buildings;
  - 4. free advertising using the public service cable channel;
  - 5. posters displayed at participating businesses.
- B. Interested students and their families will be provided with a comprehensive catalog describing the school, its philosophy, goals, curriculum and such.  
Several information nights would be planned to orient potential students and their families to what the school has to offer. Participants would be invited to schedule a preliminary meeting to discuss their goals and expectations of the school. At that time the admissions criteria would be discussed on a more personal level and the potential students and their families would be offered assistance with the admissions process.

### Admissions Policy:

- A. Admission to the school is based on a student's previous academic record, the results of a standardized test of basic skills, letters of recommendation from two teachers and the parent/child interview. If the results of a standardized test of basic skills is unavailable, the student will be required to complete one administered by the charter school.

- E. Students will be encouraged to participate in extra-curricular activities including sports, academically and nonacademically related clubs and organizations and community service projects.
- F. The school community is one that will be nurturing and supportive to the needs of its students, their parents and the general community, open to the ideas and suggestions of all participants, and based on mutual respect, honesty and trust. We seek to participate in the betterment of the greater community through community service projects, family development programs and a summer recreational and academic enrichment camp.

#### Statement of Need:

- A. In its first comprehensive study on the subject in twenty years, the U.S. Department of Education concluded:
  - 1) The American educational system is squandering one of its most precious resources by failing to motivate and challenge its best students;
  - 2) Gifted elementary students have mastered up to half of the required curriculum in five basic subject areas even before starting the school year;
  - 3) Most classroom teachers make few or no provisions for these children;
  - 4) The curriculum offered to most top students in the U.S. is geared to the average child;
  - 5) Gifted youngsters are not challenged to work to their potential;
  - 6) Many students are not well prepared for further academic study or to enter the work force.

In the past year alone, there has been much dissatisfaction expressed in the local news media by parents and even some students concerning the public school system in Lawrence. The New England Association of Colleges and Schools has strongly recommended numerous improvements if the high school is to maintain its accreditation. Members of the school board have resorted to name calling and have even come to blows due to frustration as to how to operate the school system in general, better instructional performance, raise standardized test scores, maintain discipline and improve student and teacher safety, and improve the image of the public school system.

There is no doubt that there is a need for a charter school in Lawrence for the academically gifted student.

- B. One of the most corrosive influences in public education has been the tendency of educators to lower academic standards to keep unwilling students and their parents happy rather than setting high standards and expecting students adjust upwards to meet those standards. The Lawrence Charter School would maintain rigorous standards through an accelerated curriculum to assist in fully developing each child's potential, as desired by the public outcry of many parents and serious students. The school would provide a safe, wholesome learning environment for its students through an honor code which stresses self-discipline and harmonious relationships and fosters a commitment to excellence in being the best person one can be.



### III. Recruiting and Marketing

- a) completion of partially developed marketing materials including the direct mail brochure, school catalog, admissions form and media advertising campaign;
- b) development of a comprehensive orientation program to introduce prospective students and their families to the school;
- c) appointment and training of a qualified admissions director.

### iv. Personnel

- a) commence search for qualified instructors, support staff etc., final hiring to be completed by June 1 (target date);
- b) development of an orientation program for staff, comprehensive in nature addressing all major components of the school;
- c) development of all organizational materials needed by staff, including usual day to day components.

Within two month's time:

#### I. School Handbook

- a) completion of the Student/Parent/ Teacher Handbook containing policies, procedures, school calendar, behavioral expectations etc.
- b) to be distributed to all personnel and mailed to students and parents by early May.

#### II. Recruitment

- a) recruitment of potential students through the various marketing strategies to commence on or before this time;
- b) orientation program to be offered to prospective students and their families on a regularly scheduled basis through May 30;
- c) target date for completion of student enrollment: June 30.

### III. Materials

- a) commence purchasing furnishings, equipment and supplies.
- b) selection of primary and secondary curriculum materials with input from appropriate personnel/ completion by early June;
- c) selection/purchase of classroom materials, lab equipment etc. with teacher input to be completed by June 30;
- d) resources for library to be purchased on on-going basis; major portion of purchases to be completed by June 30.

Within three month's time:

#### I. Facilities

- a) completion of any necessary renovations/improvements to facility;
- b) asthetic improvements to be completed by August 15. ie.) landscaping

By August 1 :

#### I. Personnel

- a) teachers, support staff may commence setting up, decorating etc. for beginning of school;
- b) provide extra manpower for completion of library as needed.

The following is to be submitted before the parent/child interview is scheduled:

1. a completed application form;
2. an official copy of the child's transcript of all grades and standardized test scores to date;
3. the letters of recommendation from two teachers.

The above requirements are to be mailed directly to the charter school by the child's school principal or guidance counselor. Upon receiving the above the parent/child interview will be scheduled, the final step in the admissions process.

The above admissions policy furthers the mission of the school in a non-discriminatory fashion while insuring the applicant's best interest. The admissions policy serves as a screening procedure to insure as best as possible an applicant's likelihood of succeeding in the rigorous, accelerated program the school will offer.

#### Profile of Founding Coalition:

I am applying for a charter as an individual under MGL C71/89. In addition to being a lifelong resident of Massachusetts, I have resided in Greater Lawrence for as long. I have taught for over twenty years and possess a Master's degree in Educational Administration. I am employed and certified in New Hampshire.

#### General Timetable:

- A. The following timetable is based on preparing for a 1994 charter in the event of a legislative change in the starting date. Thus, the timetable of events progresses at a faster rate than would be necessary for a September, 1995 opening date.

B. Within one month's time:

##### I. The Board of Trustees

- a) recruitment of qualified persons to serve on the Board;
- b) completion of the school's constitution and bylaws including roles and responsibilities of the Board, relationship of the Board to other participants, role of parents and students in the decision-making process;
- c) development of professional qualifications of staff, salaries, contracts, duties and responsibilities, hiring and dismissal, benefit packages, staff development, negotiations process etc. by the Board.

##### II. Facilities

- a) secure an appropriate facility to lease with option to purchase;
- b) secure approval for the safety and structural soundness of the facility;
- c) ascertain the need for any renovations or improvements to the existing structure;
- d) secure adequate insurance coverage.

LAWRENCE CHARTER SCHOOL PROJECT  
CHAPTER APPLICATION  
PART II

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## CHARTER APPLICATION: PART II

### Evidence of Support

1. Please refer to Part I,, Section 3, Statement of Need.
2. I did not feel it was prudent at this time to enlist open public support without first obtaining tentative approval for the Lawrence Charter School project.
- In the recent past, the people of Lawrence have experienced many disappointments due to the inability of community leaders and others to deliver and/or follow through on promises and/or projects. These include the revitalization of Lawrence's main business district, the relocation of Emerson College to Lawrence, the relocation of two major cultural institutions to Lawrence and so forth. It is my belief to proceed slowly in this area is more prudent based on past events.

### Educational Program

- A. Curriculum. Numbers in level column indicate level of subject matter in relation to present educational system. Courses with asterisk indicate high school level courses in relation to present educational system.

GRADE	COURSE	LEVEL	SESSIONS PER WEEK	MIN PER SESSION
4	English Grammar/Writing/Voc.	4/5	5	60
	Introduction to Literature	4/5	5	40
	Mathematics	4/5	5	40
	U.S. & World Geography	4/5	5	40
	Introduction to Science	4/5	5	40
	Art	4	1	40
	Music	4	1	40
	Keyboarding/Computer	INTRO	3	40
	Physical Education	4	1	40
	Intro. to Foreign Languages	INTRO	2	40
	Health	4/5	2	40
	Electives		2	40



GRADE	COURSE	LEVEL	SESSIONS PER WEEK	MIN PER SESSION
5	English Grammar/Writing/Voc.	5/6	5	40
	Intermediate Literature	5/6	5	40
	Mathematics	6/7	5	40
	American History I	7	5	40
	Earth Science	JH	5	40
	Foreign Language (French or (year 1; part 1) Spanish)	JH/*	5	40
	Intermediate Computer	5/6	3	40
	Health	5/6	2	40
	Physical Education	5	1	40
	Fine Arts (elective per term)	---	1	40
	Electives	---	3	40
6	English Grammar/Writing/Voc.	7/8	5	40
	Advanced Literature	7/8	5	40
	Advanced Mathematics	8/*	5	40
	American History II	8	5	40
	Life Science	JH	5	40
	Foreign Language (French or (year 1; part 2) Spanish)	JH/*	5	40
	Advanced Computer I	7/8	3	40
	Health	6/7	2	40
	Physical Education	6	1	40
	Fine Arts (elective per term)	---	1	40
	Electives	---	3	40
7	English Grammar and Composition	*	5	40
	American Literature	8/*	5	40
	Pre-Algebra	8/*	5	40
	OR			
	Algebra I	*	5	40
	Physical Science	JH	5	40
	Foreign Language (French or (year 2; part1) Spanish)	*	5	40
	Advanced Computer II	*	3	40
	Health	7/8	2	40
	Physical Education	7	1	40
	Fine Arts (elective per term)	---	1	40
8	Electives	---	3	40
	American Govt./US Economic Syst.	*	5	40
	English Grammar and Composition	*	5	40
	Classical English/World Lit.	*	5	40
	Algebra I	*	5	40
	OR			
	Geometry	*	5	40
	Development of Western Civili- zation	*	5	40
	Biology	*	5	40
	Foreign Language (French or (year 2; part 2) Spanish)	*	5	40
	Computer: Advanced Basic	*	3	40
	Health	8/*	2	40
	Physical Education	8	1	40
	Fine Arts (elective per term)	---	1	40
	Electives	---	3	40

## B. Teaching Methods

Students need to experience a wide variety of classroom instructional strategies. The selection of specific methodologies varies according to the particular instructional objectives to be achieved, background of the students, time available etc. The goal is for a balanced program with many varied activities which are taught through different methodologies. The best of many teaching methods, techniques, or approaches depends upon many factors which may change since the gains which children derive from various presentations are not the same for all. A good teacher learns to choose that which can achieve the desired results.

There are a number of methodologies a teacher can use. The selection of the appropriate method depends upon the purpose of the lesson, the material to be presented, and the ability of the students. Thus, methods may include: direct teaching, both individual or group procedures, problem solving involving thinking, research and initiative, prescriptive teaching, guided discovery, the individualized learning package, and vicarious teaching activities.

## C. School Calendar/Hours of Operation

The school calendar, due to transportation, will remain the same as the Lawrence Public Schools unless suitable transportation can be privately contracted. Classes would commence around 8:00am and end at approximately 2:30pm. Thought is also being given to an optional Saturday program (9:00-11:30am) involving areas of academic enrichment and remedial/tutorial assistance. The school will maintain a before/after-school program for working parents who need assistance monitoring their children- mornings from 6:45 to 7:45am and afternoons from 2:30 to 5:30pm. The program will include academic assistance, arts and crafts and planned recreation. The school will also operate a summer recreational and academic enrichment camp.

## Student Performance

- A. Evaluation seeks to effect improvement in the goals and objectives of the school, the understanding of the students, the instructional methods and the assessment of educational outcomes. Student performance will be evaluated through the use of teacher-made tests, publishers tests, criterion-referenced tests, standardized achievement tests and individual (independent) research projects.
- B. Methods of remediation for underperforming students will include one-on-one teacher assistance, peer tutoring and small group remedial classes.
- C. In addition to testing one needs to look at student homework assignments, participation in class, the fulfillment of student contracts, independent projects, and overall interaction of a student in the classroom to adequately evaluate learning, growth, and development.

## School Evaluation

- A. A comprehensive evaluation form based on the philosophy (mission statement), goals and objectives of the school will be used to assess the degree to which the school is living up to its stated standards. This evaluation form will be completed by school personnel and made available to all parents whose children are enrolled in the school. A less lengthy form will be used for student evaluation of the school. In addition, once the school is in operation the process for accreditation with the New England Association of Schools and Colleges will commence. The Association will then conduct a separate evaluation of the school based on the school's stated philosophy, goals and objectives.
- B. In addition to the comprehensive evaluation form for school personnel and parents and a shorter form for student use, an assessment device will need to be developed to determine if the school, in fact, is meeting the educational needs of the community it was designed to serve. The school will also have in place a parent-teacher organization with which it will work closely and become involved in the community through the Chamber of Commerce, the Lawrence Recreation Department, Partners in Education, and other community based organizations.

## Human Resource Information

- A. Teaching and administrative staff will be selected based on the following criteria:
- 1) Minimum professional training;  
Administrative- MA required in area for which applying.  
Teaching Staff- BA required; MA preferred in area for which applying;
  - 2) Successful completion of professional training as demonstrated by college transcript(s);
  - 3) Successful experience in field (preferred) or related field;
  - 4) Possess high personal and academic standards for self and students;
  - 5) Possess the ability and skills to work well with the academically gifted;
  - 6) Be of good character; must submit one character reference and successfully pass police character check;
  - 7) Certified in one of the New England states or certifiable, if not currently certified.;
  - 8) Be of sufficiently good health to perform professional responsibilities.

Targeted staff size including Administrative, teaching and support personnel: approximately 20.

- B. School personnel will be evaluated based on performance of instructional and/or administrative duties, roles and responsibilities as specified in contracts and in relation to student, parent, peer and community interaction. Included will be both supervisory and peer evaluations. Formal evaluations will be conducted, two to four in number, dependent upon experience and need culminating with



a summative evaluation in March. Informal evaluations of teaching personnel will also be conducted on a regular basis.

2. While specifics are not available in this area, the following general criteria will hopefully apply:

1) Salaries will be competitive and commensurate with experience;

2) Contracts will be for one year in duration, without tenure;

3) Hiring and dismissal, based on specific written guidelines yet to be determined, will be the responsibility of the administration;

4) Benefit packages will include medical and dental coverage, a retirement plan, and monies for further professional education and professional growth based on a set standard to be determined.

5) Staff development will be on-going and have a high priority. While a set number of professional hours will need to be accumulated to continue employment, a personal desire to increase professional competence and gain new insights on the part of administrative and instructional personnel is of paramount importance. In addition to professional growth available at local colleges and through various organizations, staff development programs will be sponsored by the school on a regular basis. Personnel from other schools will be invited to attend.

#### School Governance

To date little has been done in this area since I did not feel at this time it was prudent to enlist open public support and implement a governing body, develop a constitution or by-laws without first obtaining tentative approval for the charter school project. However, the constitutions, by-laws and forms of management of other schools/organizations are presently being collected and studied.

#### Building Options

Many options exist for a school building in Lawrence including former private schools which have closed and commercial buildings. We would wish to lease with option to purchase at this time. However, I have not formally pursued this matter without first obtaining tentative approval for the charter school project.